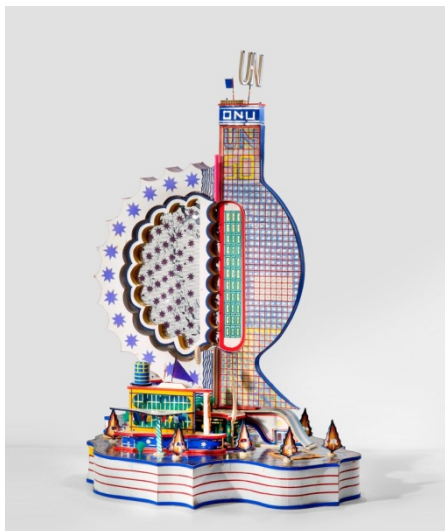


the fantastical city dreams of visionary artist bodys isek kingilez at MoMA

sofia lekka angelopoulou, aug 12, 2018



new york's MoMA presents 'bodys isek kingilez: city dreams', the first US retrospective of the late congolese artist, whose colorful, intricate sculptures explored utopian possibilities for global cityscapes. the exhibition spans kingilez's three-decade career, displaying rarely shown works, from the artist's early single-building sculptures, to spectacular sprawling cities and futuristic late works, all created from a wide range of everyday materials and found objects, such as colored paper, plastic, coca-cola cans, and bottle caps. the imagined buildings and urban environments represent his vision of a prosperous future, calling visitors to imagine, according to the artist, a *'better, more peaceful world'*. curated by sarah suzuki and produced in collaboration with artist carsten höller, city dreams gathers more than 30 works, including many rarely seen works from both public and private collections.



U.N., 1995. paper, paperboard, and other various materials, 91 × 74 × 53 cm, irreg. caac – the pigozzi collection, geneva. © bodys isek kingilez / photo: maurice aeschmann. courtesy caac – the pigozzi collection

'without a model, you are nowhere,' kingilez (1948 – 2015) once mentioned, 'a nation that can't make models is a nation that doesn't understand things, a nation that doesn't live.'

born in the agricultural village of kimbembele-ihunga, in what was then belgian congo (now the democratic republic of the congo), bodys isek kingilez moved to the city of kinshasa in 1970. he started making art in the late seventies, when he found himself compelled to get his hands on ‘scissors, a gilette razor , and some glue and paper’ , and worked as a restorer of traditional objects for six years at the institut des museés nationaux du zaïre (now the institut du museés nationaux du congo) before devoting himself full-time to making his own art.



belle hollandaise, 1991. paper, paperboard, and other various materials, 55 × 80.5 × 56 cm. collection groningen museum. photograph by marten de leeuw

reminiscent in color and vitality of the buildings of bolivian architect freddy mamani, kingilez’s ‘extreme maquettes’ represent fantastical, utopian models for a more harmonious society of the future. his work explores questions of urban growth, economic inequity, how communities and societies function, and the rehabilitative power of architecture, stemming from his own urban experience of a city (kinshasa) that grew exponentially and organically without adequate urban planning and infrastructure. reflecting dreams for his country, his continent and the world, his sculptures of imagined buildings and cities address social issues on a global scale . in the complex multi -building cityscape ‘kimbembele ihunga’ (1994), the artist imagines his home village complete with a soccer stadium, banks, restaurants, and skyscrapers , while in ‘ville fantôme’ (1996), kingilez has imagined a peaceful city in which doctors and police are not needed.



kimbembele ihunga detail, 1994. paper, paperboard, plastic, and other various materials, 130 × 185 × 320 cm. caac – the pigozzi collection, geneva. © bodys isek kingilez / photo: maurice aeschimann. courtesy caac-the pigozzi collection

‘city dreams’ is the first opportunity in new york to explore the artist’s full body of work and experience his dazzling, intricate sculptures of utopian cityscapes. kingilez was

previously featured in the MoMA exhibition 'projects 59: architecture as metaphor' (1997), while his work has long been featured in major international exhibitions and institutions, including the centre georges pompidou in paris and the documenta XI in kassel.

'bodys isek kingelez: city dreams' is on display from **26 may 2018** to **1 january 2019** at **MoMA's philip johnson galleries**. the exhibition is organized by sarah suzuki, curator, with hillary reder, curatorial assistant, department of drawings and prints, the museum of modern art. the exhibition design is produced in collaboration with the artist carsten höller.



installation view of the exhibition

© 2018 the museum of modern art, photo by denis doorly



kimbembele ihunga, 1994, same as above



U.N. detail, same as before



stars palme bouygues, 1989. paper, paperboard, and other various materials, 100 × 40 × 40 cm. van lierde collection, brussels. vincent everarts photography brussels



stars palme bouygues detail, same as before



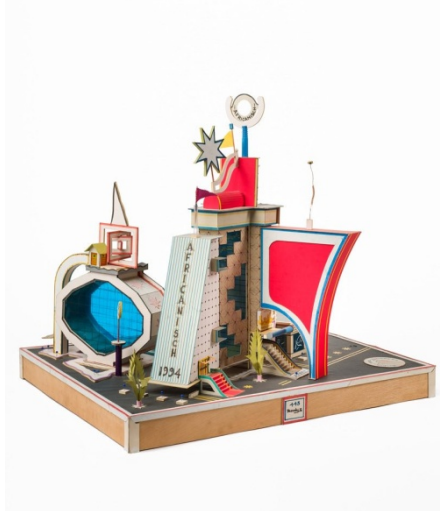
paris nouvel, 1989. paper, paperboard, and other various materials, 85 × 61 × 70 cm. long-term loan from the centre national des arts plastiques, france to the château d'oiron, france, fnac 981003. © cnap (france) / droits réservés; photograph by Frédéric Pignoux, studio ludo



paris nouvel, same as before



place de la ville, 1993. paper, paperboard, plastic, and other various materials, 40 × 85 × 75 cm. courtesy the museum of everything



africanisch, 1994. paper, paperboard, plastic, and other

various materials, 50 × 57 × 61 cm. private collection, paris. photograph by kleinefenn



africanisch detail, same as before



ville fantôme, 1996. paper, paperboard, plastic and other various materials, 120 × 570 × 240 cm. caac – the pigozzi collection, geneva. © bodys isek kingelez / photo by maurice aeschimann. courtesy caac – the pigozzi collection



ville fantôme detail, same as before



sports internationaux, 1997. paper, plastic, and other various materials, 90 × 85 × 25 cm, irreg. purchased 2013 with funds from tim fairfax, am, through the queensland art gallery | gallery of modern art foundation. collection queensland art gallery, brisbane. © qagoma, natasha harth



ville de sète 3009, 2000. paper, paperboard, plastic, and other various materials, 80 × 300 × 210 cm. collection musée international des arts modestes (miam), sète, france. © pierre schwartz adagp; courtesy musée international des arts modestes (miam), sète, france



ville de sète 3009 detail, same as above



nippon tower, 2005. paper, paperboard, plastic, and other various materials, $67 \times 34 \times 22$ cm, irreg. courtesy aeroplastics contemporary, brussels. vincent everarts photography brussels



belle hollandaise detail, same as before



bodys isek kingelez with étoile rouge congolaise in nantes, 1993. courtesy andré magnin, paris; photo by andré magnin

Source: [designboom](https://www.designboom.com).